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## **Trust, Anger, Resentment, Forgiveness: On Blame and its Reasons**

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*Abstract:* A discussion of the scope that exists for the normative assessment of blame. The paper starts from the assumption that blame is to be understood in terms of the reactive attitudes. A particular crux is the question of whether blame can be assessed critically if conditions are in place that render the reactive attitudes apt or warranted. The paper argues that even warranted blame can be managed critically, and that this is something we often have reason to do, given the oppositional nature of reactive blame. The point is illustrated through a discussion of forgiveness and hypocrisy. A further claim is that, once reasons for reactive blame are distinguished from distinct reasons for managing it in different ways, space opens up for interesting global challenges to reactive blame, even when it is internally apt or warranted.

Blame is naturally understood in terms of the reactive attitudes, such as resentment and indignation. To blame someone is to be exercised emotionally about what they have done, and the reactive attitudes are paradigmatic cases of being exercised in this distinctive way. My question in the present paper is the following: what scope does the reactive account allow for the critical assessment of blame?

One view, which I shall call the warranted attitude account, holds that reactive blame is subject to critical assessment solely in terms of considerations that might or might not render it fitting or appropriate. If another person has wronged you, then you have a reason to resent

them, and this alone is sufficient to render your blame warranted; blame is in this way like distrust, which is a fitting way of relating to individuals who have shown themselves to be unreliable. A different view emphasizes the character of reactive blame as a form of angry disapprobation. It holds that anger is essentially unintelligible in virtue of the hostile action tendencies that it essentially involves. According to this approach, blame is always questionable, even when it responds to considerations we would ordinarily understand to be reasons for attitudes such as resentment.

I wish to sketch a position that is intermediate between these two extremes. In particular, I agree that the character of blame as angry disapprobation raises normative questions about it, even when it responds to wrongs or moral injuries. But it is an overreaction to conclude that angry disapprobation is inherently questionable. I shall argue, first, that blame is unlike distrust in being an essentially oppositional stance; it does not merely register transparently the facts to which it is a response, but comes between people as a psychological reality with its own weight and significance. I argue, second, that oppositional states of this kind are functionally intelligible to those who are subject to them, at two complementary levels. They connect us to an economy of social disesteem that crucially facilitates norm-compliant behavior in human communities; they also play a constructive role within the interpersonal contexts that link wrongdoers with those whom they have wronged. I argue, third, that reactive attitudes can be managed in different ways, even when conditions are in place that render them warranted as responses to their objects. This is shown by brief reflection on forgiveness and hypocritical blame, which illustrate the scope for assessing our managerial practices by reference to moral and other reasons for action. I argue, finally, that there is a foothold in

normative assessment of this kind for a global critique of moral blame, even if the attitudes that it involves are not inherently unintelligible.

### *1. Reactive Blame and its Warrant.*

Blame is an elusive and protean phenomenon, one that seems resistant to hard-edged analysis.

But one of its characteristic forms is what we might call reactive blame, whereby we respond emotionally to moral infractions, with attitudes such as resentment, indignation, and guilt.

Emotions of this class have come to be referred to, following P. F. Strawson, as reactive attitudes.<sup>1</sup> Strawson himself took our susceptibility to such attitudes to be constitutive of our participation in normal interpersonal relationships, and also to involve the attribution to those to whom we are so related of moral accountability. These claims are far from self-evident, of course, and there is room for dissent about both of them. For purposes of discussion in this paper, however, I wish to grant the recognizably Strawsonian thesis that the reactive attitudes involve at least one familiar form of blame for actions that are morally impermissible.<sup>2</sup>

Reactive blame, construed along these lines, is a matter of attitudes rather than actions. To blame a person in this way for something they have done is not to do anything oneself, but to be subject to a reactive attitude, such as resentment, that is directed toward the wrongdoer. But attitudes of this kind are answerable to their own, distinctive reasons. These may be construed as considerations that render the attitudes in question fitting or warranted or apt. Examples of normative considerations of this kind include facts about the danger that is posed to a person by a situation or an object in their immediate environment, which can make it fitting

for the person to experience the emotion of fear; or facts about an individual's trustworthiness and reliability, which generally render it warranted to invest trust in the individual.<sup>3</sup>

Reasons for attitudes such as these do not render it mandatory or required for people to adopt the attitudes in question; in part this is because it is not always under our control whether we have attitudes of the kind that would be appropriate to the circumstances we find ourselves in. But the reasons in question provide a baseline for the direct normative assessment of the attitudes that they purport to regulate. Trust, for instance, is out of place when it is invested in someone who has been shown to be untrustworthy; and fear tends toward the pathological when it is directed at situations or objects that do not pose some real danger for the person who is subject to it. By the same token, attitudes of these kinds generally make sense when conditions in place that render them apt or warranted.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of reactive blame, the attitudes at issue are also answerable to reasons of this general kind. The considerations that render these attitudes fitting or appropriate involve, in the most general terms, the violation of basic moral requirements or norms. Resentment, for instance, might well be apt in circumstances in which another person has betrayed a confidence or broken a promise or inflicted suffering or humiliation. More specifically, the conditions that make this attitude fitting have something to do with the morally questionable quality of will of the agent at whom they are directed.<sup>5</sup> We resent people, characteristically, when their objective violation of moral requirements reflects a failure to take those requirements seriously, as bases for the regulation of their own conduct (where such failures may range from flagrant dismissal of the requirements to the negligent disregard of them in deliberation about what to do). More specifically still, resentment is warranted under conditions in which the agent's disregard of

moral requirements involves, in particular, an attitude of disregard for the individual who is subject to resentment. You resent someone when they have wronged you through their actions, where this is a matter of their having flouted claims you have against them, or acting without consideration for what they owe specifically to you.<sup>6</sup> The aptness conditions for this paradigm of reactive blame thus involve violations of moral requirements that have a relational character, being requirements that are owed to other individuals, and that are connected to claims that those individuals have against the agent to compliance with them.<sup>7</sup> This is a theme to which I shall return later in this paper.

These points about the fittingness conditions for the attitudes involved in reactive blame strike me as relatively uncontroversial. Resentment and the other reactive emotions are clearly answerable to normative considerations that can render them warranted or lacking in warrant. This shows itself in our judgment that it wouldn't be apt or fitting to feel resentment toward someone who hadn't wronged you in any way at all. The question is whether these fittingness conditions provide the only legitimate basis for the normative assessment of reactive blame.

Some philosophers appear to answer this question in the affirmative. On what I shall call the "warranted attitude" approach, reactive blame is admissible whenever the immediate conditions are in place that would render it fitting or apt. Further conditions, about for instance the freedom of the agent to do otherwise or their capacity to control their conduct by reference to the moral standards they are blamed for flouting, do not enter into it.<sup>8</sup>

This way of thinking about things appears to undermine, at a stroke, a large part of the basis for the traditional debate about free will as a condition for moral blameworthiness. Philosophers who join that debate typically assume that there is a real question to be addressed

about whether it can ever be fair to blame agents for their actions in a world in which everything happens in accordance with deterministic laws, or in which human agency is understood as essentially part of the order of nature. Pessimists, to follow P. F. Strawson's terminology, traditionally return a negative answer to this question, while more optimistically inclined philosophers defend the conclusion that it can be fair or reasonable to blame people for their moral failings even if they lacked ultimate freedom of the will. Strawson himself felt that the traditional debate between optimists and pessimists was in some way ill conceived, and the warranted attitude approach offers a way of articulating this idea.<sup>9</sup> Resentment and the other reactive attitudes are made fitting or appropriate by the quality of will that others display toward us in their interactions with us. But if someone has shown contempt for our basic interests or disregard for the claims we have against them, then that is sufficient to establish that resentment would be a warranted response. Questions about whether blame would be fair if the agent who harbored these attitudes of disregard toward us lacked freedom of the will or the capacity to control their behavior do not so much as get a foothold.<sup>10</sup>

It is illuminating to compare reactive blame to distrust in this respect.<sup>11</sup> Trust is a complicated and elusive phenomenon, which I do not propose to analyze here. But however exactly trust is understood, it involves, in part, a tendency to rely on the person in whom trust is invested: to have confidence that they will live up to their responsibilities and be true to their word, and to plan one's own activities on the assumption that the person who is trusted will comport themselves in this way. Understood along these lines, trust clearly involves attitudes that are assessable by reference to their own norms of aptness or warrant. People can, after all, be more or less trustworthy or reliable, and it is appropriate to calibrate the trust we invest in

people to the degree to which they do or do not exhibit these properties. If someone has betrayed your trust, or shown themselves generally to be an unreliable partner to interpersonal undertakings, then it would be fitting for you to adopt an attitude toward them of severely reduced trust. This attitude of distrust, furthermore, seems warranted, independently of whatever further facts may obtain about the freedom or moral powers of the person to whom it is directed. Someone who is unreliable should simply not be trusted, and the attitude of trust is entirely justified so long as this condition is met.

Trust is, of course, a significant human good. It is to our advantage to be able to stand in trust-based relationships with other people, which are both valuable in themselves, and a condition for a range of other goods. Among other things, our ability to coordinate our activities with others, and to benefit from mutually advantageous cooperative arrangements, will be seriously threatened if others are unwilling to invest trust in us. But these facts about the untoward effects of distrust on the person who is its target do not provide an independent basis for the normative assessment of it. When people have shown themselves to be unreliable, then it is entirely warranted for others to withdraw whatever trust they may have placed in them, notwithstanding the negative consequences this may have for the unreliable party. So, too, with reactive blame, according to the warranted attitude approach. Resentment and the other forms of reactive blame are typically not attitudes that are welcomed by the person who is their target. It is disconcerting to have such attitudes directed at you, something that we typically would prefer not to experience. But the proponent of the warranted attitude approach will insist that, as in the case of distrust, these untoward effects provide no independent basis for the normative assessment of reactive blame. If someone has wronged you, then resentment is an apt reaction;



the fact that responding to the wrong in this way might be unwelcome to the person who is its target does not provide a reason against the attitude, or undermine the considerations that make it fitting in the first place.

## *2. The Maximalist Critique of Blame.*

Having sketched the warranted attitude approach, I would now like to present a contrasting position, which holds that reactive blame is inherently problematic—even when conditions are in place that would seem to render it fitting. This position starts with the observation that the reactive attitudes are emotions in the register of anger, and that anger is an essentially oppositional state. Attitudes of this kind differ from the example of trust in that they set the person subject to them at odds with the person at whom they are directed. Anger is typically occasioned by something another person has done, who may be understood to be the target of the emotion. But its characteristic manifestation is as something that comes between the subject and the target, setting the former against the latter. A primitive but intelligible expression of this oppositional character might be the disposition to harm or to lash out at the target of anger, something we could make sense of by adverting to the emotional state that is thus expressed. But anger is oppositional even in cases in which hostile action tendencies of this kind are absent or suppressed or sublimated into something less nakedly destructive. It is an emotional condition that does not merely register transparently the presence of the circumstances that may have occasioned it, but that has weight in its own right, as something that comes between the subject and the target, and sets them at odds with each other.

This is something that is familiar to all of us from the context of our intimate relationships. We are exceptionally sensitive within these contexts to the presence of angry emotions on the part of persons that we are very close to; we can discern such emotions in the subtle emphasis with which our partners stack the dishes after supper or close the door on their way to work. Furthermore, the emotional state to which we are thus attuned is one that has interpersonal significance in its own right, as something that needs to be acknowledged and dealt with. The partner who is angry at you may have no effective disposition to lash out at you or to inflict suffering. But the emotion sets them against you, all the same, figuring as an irritant in your ongoing relations to each other. Its phenomenology makes salient and persistent the circumstance that occasioned it, so that the subject is prone to dwell on those circumstances, in ways that make it difficult for the parties to move on so long as it persists. It is inherently a source of social friction and disharmony, and in this way something of an oppositional reality.

The oppositional character of angry emotions bears on a different question that has been raised about blame, which concerns its characteristic force. It is natural to think that to blame someone for something is different from merely registering the wrong that was done by the agent, and different specifically in its force. This aspect of blame becomes salient when we think of it from the perspective of the agent who is its target. To be on the receiving end of blame is to be aware of another party as set against one somehow, on account of something one has done to them or to someone else. The oppositional character of angry disapprobation explains this important dimension of blame, and this contributes significantly to the plausibility of the reactive account of the phenomenon. The affective and dispositional features of anger that give it its interpersonal significance correspond very closely to our intuitive sense of its characteristic

force. Blame goes beyond the registering of wrongdoing by another party, precisely in virtue of involving attitudes that of their nature come between the blamer and the person who is blamed.

But this oppositional aspect of angry disapprobation also figures prominently in its maximalist critique. To be set against someone, in the way characteristic of anger, is to relate to them in a way that can easily seem questionably intelligible, as Martha Nussbaum has recently argued.<sup>12</sup> Nussbaum's account centers around an interpretation of the oppositional element in angry disapprobation, which she takes essentially to involve the desire that harm should befall the person at whom anger is targeted. This quest for "payback", as Nussbaum thinks of it, is something that can be rendered intelligible only if it fits into a larger pattern of evaluative assumptions that are themselves justifiable. But Nussbaum denies that the desire for payback makes evaluative sense in this way.<sup>13</sup> The thought that is implicit in anger is that it would be good if the target of the emotion were to suffer harm, and good on account of the wrong that the target agent has committed. These ideas might make sense if we could understand the payback to be visited on the agent as negating or in some way compensating for the bad that the agent has already committed. But as many philosophers have observed, to think in these terms is to indulge in wishful thinking.

A wrongful action, once committed, cannot be undone by anything that might later be visited on the agent, nor can its character as wrongful be affected such ex post facto afflictions. The only thing that might reliably link the past wrongdoing to the later infliction of harm on the wrongdoer is the sensibility of the angry person who inflicts the harm, which could include a disposition to take pleasure in the wrongdoer's suffering. But it is hard to see in this Nietzschean mechanism a genuine evaluative justification for the infliction of harm on the

wrongdoer. Any pleasure that might be experienced by the victim of wrongdoing seems tainted by its sadistic character. More fundamentally, an evaluative account will render intelligible the desire for payback only if it identifies some independent good that would be realized by the satisfaction of that desire; but the appeal to pleasure treats the desire as a brute given, a primitive source of satisfaction rather than something that tracks independently valuable states of the world.

Attention to the oppositional character of reactive blame thus raises a basic question about its internal plausibility. If angry disapprobation essentially involves the desire that the target of the emotion should suffer harm, this way of relating to others may not make evaluative sense. This is true, moreover, even if the target of reactive blame did in fact act so as to wrong another party, which is the kind of circumstance that we understand to render the reactive attitudes fitting or warranted.

### *3. Making Sense of Oppositional Blame.*

I agree with Nussbaum that the payback story is deeply implausible. To counter the maximalist critique of blame, we need an account of angry disapprobation that detaches from it the desire for harm that Nussbaum takes to be its essential feature, while still doing justice to its oppositional character. We also need a broader story about why it is important to us that we should have oppositional reactions to wrongdoing in our emotional repertoire. I take up these tasks in the present section, sketching in very broad strokes a constructive interpretation of oppositional blame.<sup>14</sup>

There is no question that anger can give rise to violent and aggressive behavior. As I noted above, people sometimes deliberately act so as to inflict harm on other persons, and anger is a possible source of actions of this kind. But anger can generate social friction, and represent an oppositional reality, even when it is felt by agents who have completely sublimated any residual desires to harm or lash out at those who are the targets of their attitudes. This is in fact how we experience it in our social relations with friends and relatives who do not harbor genuine desires to see us suffer harm. As in the earlier example involving anger within an intimate relationship, the emotion, when present, tends to come between the parties to the relationship. The person subject to it is upset about something that the other party has done, and is disposed to confront the other person about it and to tolerate the social friction that this might occasion. Anger is a way of being exercised about a past action that sets us against the agent of the action, as I put it above; but the core behavioral manifestation of this attitude is not so much the desire for payback as the inclination to confront the target person, to lodge a protest against what that person has done, and to focus the attention of both parties on the action protested against, as something that needs to be dealt with.<sup>15</sup>

To be on the receiving end of an oppositional emotion such as this is generally unpleasant. We have an innate tendency to value harmonious relations with the people whom we encounter as we make our way through life. Or at least most of us do: part of the fascination of the Larry David character in the HBO series “Curb Your Enthusiasm” is his utter immunity to the forms of discretion and silence that facilitate and sustain frictionless relations with the individuals who inhabit our social world. This is sort of mesmerizing to watch, because it goes so strongly against the grain for most of us. Anger, with its associated disposition to confront

and to protest, is a powerful counter to this natural tendency to maintain social harmony, prompting us to stand up to people who commit infractions against us rather than ignoring those infractions and carrying on as if nothing had happened. Moreover, the same tendency to harmony renders it acutely uncomfortable to be the target of angry disapprobation, which is a condition that most of us have an innate aversion to. These connected aspects of anger make it fitting to characterize it as an intrinsic source of social discomfort and unease.

To say that anger generates a kind of social friction to which we are typically averse, of course, is not to say that it involves an innate desire that its target should suffer harm. Those who attribute to anger a desire for payback of this kind generally think of the harm to be visited on the target as distinct from the anger with which it is associated, involving something like the bodily damage and physical pain that might be suffered when the angry person lashes out. My point, instead, is that anger is itself a syndrome that it is unpleasant to experience. For those subject to it, anger pushes them to stand up to others and oppose them, putting them into a form of social relation that we are typically strongly motivated to avoid. This same form of social relation is even more uncomfortable for the individuals who are the targets of blame, leaving them estranged and alienated from other members of their social world. These important aspects of anger are the result of interactions between the oppositional character of anger and our inherent sociability: our innate concern for the esteem or disregard that other individuals harbor toward us. But anger can thrust us into aversive relations of this kind even if it does not itself involve an essential desire to harm or to inflict discomfort.

Interpreted correctly, the aversive character of oppositional blame can help to render it intelligible, in general terms, as an element within our emotional repertoire. I would distinguish

two stages of analysis. First, anger in its undifferentiated form seems continuous with emotional reactions to which other social animals are subject, which subserve the function of incentivizing norm-compliant behavior on the part of individual members of the species. Anger is a syndrome that disposes individuals to respond to threats and slights with behavior that confronts and challenges the perpetrator. The overt manifestations of this primitive tendency function to attach penalties to anti-social behavior on the part of group members, and this promotes the important goal of keeping them in a cooperative rather than competitive mode of interacting with each other. But social animals are sensitive to each other's attitudes, and have some capacity to keep track of those attitudes over time; we may speculate, accordingly, that attitudes of hostility and oppositional confrontation can help to incentivize cooperative behavior even when they do not give rise to overt sanctioning behavior.

It is very plausible that the generic capacity to experience emotions in the key of anger evolved developmentally in virtue of its ability to contribute in these ways to incentivizing cooperation. Anger seems an important mechanism whereby social creatures signal to each other that there are lines that are not to be crossed, and this is surely at least part of the story about how it emerged in the first place as a stable part of our emotional equipment. But if this much is correct, we may well wonder whether human beings would be able to internalize and comply with the basic moral norms that enable cooperation among us in the absence of this emotional tendency. A form of life in which we overcame these emotional tendencies might be one in which our ability to learn to comply with cooperative moral norms would be drastically diminished. Our susceptibility to such tendencies connects us to each other in an economy of

regard and disesteem, where this in turn seems important to our ability to achieve a cooperative equilibrium in our ongoing interactions with other members of our community.

At the first stage of analysis, we reflect on continuities between human anger and similar emotional reactions that contribute to maintaining cooperation in other social animals. In a second stage, we attend more closely to the refinement of basic anger into the reactive attitudes that I have asserted to be essential to moral blame. As I noted in section 1 above, these attitudes are commonly and correctly understood to rest on the importance we attach to the attitudes that others take toward us. Strawson observed that resentment and its ilk are crucially responses to the ill-will and indifference that others display toward us;<sup>16</sup> they in this way have an inherently social content, being triggered by actions that display a lack of regard for us. They reflect, further, a sense that some minimal level of regard or good will is owed by members of our communities to each other. In feeling resentment about something another person has done, we are in effect, as Strawson further observed, *demanding* that the target of our emotional reaction should have acted otherwise.<sup>17</sup> This is directly connected to the idea that the conditions that immediately warrant the reactive attitudes are ones in which the bearer of the attitudes has been wronged by the party at whom they are directed. The sense of a wrong or a grievance that is latent in these emotions presupposes that there is a basic level and quality of interpersonal regard that people owe to each other, and that the wrongful party in a particular interaction is someone who has not lived up to this interpersonal expectation.

Reactive blame, understood along these lines, has some additional features that contribute to its generic value and importance; I wish to highlight two of them. The distinctive character of resentment and the other reactive attitudes, first of all, contributes to the legibility



of moral standards as genuine demands or practical requirements, rather than merely aspirational values that it might be desirable (but optional) for individuals to realize in their lives. They play this role in virtue of being refinements of anger that reflect demands we impose on each other for a basic level of good will or regard. Moral standards represent practical requirement in the first place, in part, insofar as they are understood to define expectations that are owed to other parties, which suits them to function interpersonally as demands that we address to each other. They are understood to play this role, furthermore, insofar as violation of the standards attracts reactions in the register of anger. To be subject to moral requirements, most fundamentally, is to be subject to standards that define what we owe to each other as persons, and that provide others with a basis for angry disapprobation when they are disregarded or flouted. The susceptibility to reactive anger, then, is not merely something that helps to incentivize norm-compliant behavior; it contributes, more basically, to rendering moral norms intelligible to agents as practical requirements or obligations. It is not clear that we would understand ourselves to be under moral requirements that regulate our interactions with each other in a world in which we lacked capacities for the kind of angry disapprobation represented by the reactive attitudes.

Attitudes of this kind, I have suggested, reflect a conception of ourselves as having claims against other people to a minimal level of consideration and regard; this is part of what it is to think about moral standards as defining requirements that we owe to each other. Reactive blame is a reaction specifically to the flouting of a moral claim, and we may think of the individuals who experience it as asserting their claims interpersonally. The resentful party does not merely acquiesce in the display of ill will or disregard toward them, but is exercised about it

emotionally, in ways that dispose them to stand up to the perpetrator and confront them about what the perpetrator did. These aspects of reactive blame point to a further and distinct value that it helps to constitute.

A community whose members have the reactive attitudes in their repertoire, and who understand each other to be entitled to those attitudes in response to the violation of interpersonal claims, confers on its members a distinctive kind of standing. It is the standing to assert claims on one's own behalf in one's relations with those who would trample on them, which connects in turn with an attractive conception of individuals as equipped with dignity and self-respect. To respect oneself, in the relevant sense, is to take there to be a basic level of consideration and regard that is owed to one by the other people who inhabit one's social world, and to be prepared to assert one's claims to compliance with these basic standards of interpersonal regard through one's susceptibility to reactive blame.<sup>18</sup> People who are equipped with these reactions and prepared to express them when they are called for will be willing to stand up for themselves, and to protest on their own behalf against infringements of their basic moral claims. Indeed, it seems to me plausible to suppose that the reactive attitudes are essential to our conception of ourselves as bearers of moral claims in the first place, since to have a claim of this kind against someone is to see oneself as having warrant for reactive blame on occasions when the claim is flouted.

This has necessarily been an abbreviated discussion of a topic that is complex and ramifying; there is much more that could be said about the functions of oppositional blame and about the relational content of the moral norms that give the content of the reactive attitudes. But I hope I have succeeded in sketching an interpretation of reactive blame that does justice to

its oppositional character, while depriving the maximalist critique of its basis. The key points are as follows: anger sometimes disposes people to act with the aim of inflicting harm on those at whom it is directed, but the desire for payback is not essential to this attitude. Its oppositional character is a function of the way it goes against the grain of our inherent sociability, coming between the subject of the emotion and the person at whom it is targeted, insofar as it disposes the former to stand up to and to confront the latter. We are innately averse to being on the receiving end of emotions of this kind, and this helps to illuminate their evolutionary role as basic mechanisms for incentivizing compliance with important social norms. Furthermore, the refinement of anger into the specifically reactive attitudes contributes to rendering moral standards intelligible as practical requirements, and it is an important element in a conception of individuals as endowed with dignity and self-respect.

By showing that the desire for payback is not essential to reactive blame, we liberate it from the incoherent thought that the infliction of harm on the target of anger will somehow negate or undo the wrong that that person originally committed. And by situating reactive blame in relation to important social functions and values, we help to make sense of it, as an element in our emotional repertoire that we have reason to embrace and to affirm. These results undermine the maximalist critique of angry blame, showing it to be a way of responding to moral infractions that is not inherently problematic.

#### *4. Managing Oppositional Reactions: Forgiveness and Hypocrisy.*

If reactive blame basically makes sense as a part of our emotional equipment, then it might seem that it will be in good order whenever conditions are in place that render its constituent

attitudes warranted or fitting. As we saw in section 1 above, these are conditions in which one person has been wronged by another, where the wrong reflects a failure to show sufficient regard or good will toward to the party who was wronged. According to the warranted attitude approach, if someone has treated you in this way, then you have reason to resent them, and that is all there is to say about the norms that regulate reactive blame. But this conclusion is too swift. I now want to argue that the oppositional character of reactive blame provides a foothold for its normative critique, even when it is taken as established that its constituent attitudes would be warranted or fitting.

The first thing to note is that oppositional attitudes are prime candidates for being managed in various ways.<sup>19</sup> As we have seen, they tend to come between the subject and the target of the attitude, disposing the former to confront and stand up to the latter. But there are different practical stances that people can adopt toward an attitude of this kind. At one end of the spectrum of managerial possibilities, they can accede to the oppositional state, taking the friction it introduces into their interpersonal relations to be a significant feature of them that needs to be dealt with by the parties to it. Agents who accede in this way will take themselves to have good reason to act on the associated dispositions to protest and confront the target of their reactive attitudes. They will treat the fact of their resentment to be an important dimension of their ongoing relationship the person who wronged them, something that has to be acknowledged as their relations plays out over time.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is the possibility of treating the oppositional attitude as an insignificant element in one's biographical relations with the target of the attitude. One can try to overcome it or suppress it, for instance. And if such efforts are not successful, one

can still set one's reactive anger to the side, treating the associated dispositions to confrontation and protest as behavioral tendencies that one does not have good reason to act on, even if they persist in some degree. To adopt one of these strategies is to take a stand on one's own attitudes, reflexively affirming them or setting oneself against them as elements in one's emotional biography.

Managerial stances of these kinds can be adopted toward many of one's judgment-sensitive attitudes, and it often makes sense for us to respond to them in these ways. Intellectual inquiry, for instance, often begins when we suspend judgment on a question that it is important for us to resolve, setting to the side whatever natural tendency we might have to believe a given answer to the question in order to conduct a disciplined investigation of the reasons that bear on it.<sup>20</sup> Something similar is possible in respect to reactive emotions, when we suspend judgment on the moral questions embedded in them, with an eye to thinking systematically about the associated facts. I might find myself unreflectively inclined to resent my friend when she does not reach out to me during a period when I am under significant work-related stress. But I can put this attitude to the side in order to apply myself to understanding better the attitudes that underlay my friend's prolonged inattention. For all I knew initially, she might have been under considerable professional pressure herself, or dealing with family emergencies that I had no inkling of, in which event her radio silence would not necessarily reflect the kind of disregard or ill will that would ordinarily warrant the kind of angry disapprobation that resentment represents.

In the cases just canvassed, judgement-sensitive attitudes are suspended so that we may arrive at a better view of the reasons that properly bear on them. These are reasons that make

the attitudes warranted or fitting, and once we have reached a stable reflective conception of how things stand with these reasons, we typically modify our attitudes accordingly. That is, we exit the state of suspended commitment, and allow those attitudes to form that are rendered fitting by the reasons we now judge to obtain. In the cases that are my primary concern in this paper, however, things are otherwise in this respect. These are cases in which the agent is satisfied that a given oppositional attitude would be fitting or apt, but attends to other considerations that have a bearing on the question of how best to manage it. Resentment may be known to be warranted, on account of the fact that the subject of the attitude was in fact wronged by the person at whom it is directed. But at a certain point it may no longer be productive or reasonable to continue to accede to this oppositional stance, and to treat it as a significant factor in one's ongoing relations with the party whose wrongdoing renders it fitting. One might instead resolve to set it aside or to overcome it. These ways of managing one's oppositional emotions represent exertions of one's agency, and they are responsive to reasons of their own: not directly to the considerations that rendered the emotions apt in the first place, but to practical reasons for action, which connect to the values that might be furthered or inhibited by the different ways of managing the emotions that it is open to us to adopt.

To see how this might work in practice, it will be helpful to consider briefly two familiar classes of example in which agents are called on to make managerial decisions about reactive attitudes that are internally fitting. The first involves cases of hypocritical blame, in which agents are subject to reactive attitudes toward others for moral infractions that they themselves have committed. It seems that there is something morally problematic about this combination of stances. And yet the reactive agents of the hypocrite might well be perfectly warranted in light

of facts about how the agents against whom they are targeted have comported themselves. If someone has lied to you about a matter of importance, this would ordinarily constitute a moral wrong, of the sort that gives you warrant for resenting the lack of regard toward you that they have displayed. That this is the case is unaffected by the fact (if it is a fact) that you have routinely lied to others about matters that are similarly significant to them. So the moral objection to hypocritical blame in such cases has to be compatible with the fact that the attitudes constitutive of it might be ones that it is fitting for the hypocrite to experience. How should we make sense of this?

In my view, the answer to this question appeals to moral reasons for managerial actions regarding the reactive attitudes of the hypocrite.<sup>21</sup> The hypocrite's lack of moral standing to blame others in these cases can be understood in terms of the idea that there is a moral objection to their managing their warranted attitudes in a certain way: by acceding to them, treating them as significant elements in the ongoing relations they stand in to the person at whom the attitudes are targeted. For instance, the hypocrite might give clear expression to the reactive attitudes to which they are subject, and allow them to come between themselves and the person who has wronged them. These ways of dealing with one's angry disapprobation involve exertions of one's agency, and they are morally problematic so long as one is willing to commit similar wrongs oneself.<sup>22</sup> To escape the moral complaint, it seems, one must either renounce the reactive blame that it is internally fitting to experience toward the person who has wronged one, or acknowledge and apologize for one's own similar pattern of immorality and make a sincere attempt to avoid such behavior in the future. But to accord interpersonal significance to

one's angry disapprobation without acknowledging and disavowing the similar things one has done oneself is morally objectionable.<sup>23</sup>

The second class of cases that illustrate the role of managerial requirements involves forgiveness. It is something of a staple in the extensive literature on forgiveness that it is at least superficially paradoxical. We are in a position to forgive another party only when that party has wronged us, acting toward us in ways that make it fitting to blame them for what they have done. But once this condition is satisfied, it seems there is nothing that the wrongdoer might later do that would undermine the warrant they have given their victim for continued angry disapprobation. As Agnes Callard has put it, our reasons to be angry at another are reasons to be angry forever, insofar as they are considerations that will always provide some internal warrant for the attitudes constitutive of blame, rendering it fitting for us to be subject to those attitudes.<sup>24</sup> But if this is the case, how is rational forgiveness so much as possible? How can it ever be reasonable for us to forgive the wrongdoer if the reasons to which angry disapprobation directly responds remain indefinitely in place?

Answers to these questions will remain elusive so long as we attend solely to considerations of aptness or warrant for such reactive attitudes as resentment. But forgiveness begins to make sense if we expand our view to encompass the kind of managerial stances discussed above. It is noteworthy that the language in which we talk about forgiveness is deeply agential in character. Forgiving a person is something that we typically *do*, and the vocabulary we default to in analyzing the phenomenon reflects this agential aspect. To forgive another, it is natural to suppose, is to *forswear* the resentment that would be fitting or warranted under the circumstances, and this is a matter of managing the attitude in a certain way.<sup>25</sup> You



might not be able to ensure that no trace of resentment remains in your feelings toward the party who wronged you. But if you forgive that party, you will have resolved to disavow such residual resentment as you might be subject to, treating it as an insignificant element in your ongoing relations with the person.<sup>26</sup> This is a way of exercising managerial control with regard to an emotion that it would still be apt to experience, and I submit that we cannot make sense of forgiveness without distinguishing between attitudes of angry disapprobation and the agential stances we might adopt toward such attitudes.

If this way of understanding forgiveness is on the right lines, then our reasons to forgive should be reasons for acting in certain ways, which are distinct from the considerations of fittingness that provide reasons for angry disapprobation in the first place. And this is in fact how we tend to think about forgiveness, in practice. Thus, in what we might think of as the standard case it is actions of the wrongdoer that make it reasonable for the aggrieved party to offer forgiveness. In the cases I have in mind, the wrongdoer remorsefully acknowledges that they showed disregard for the party whom they wronged, apologizes for having done so, offers to make amends, and resolves to do better in the future. This familiar syndrome of *ex post* reactions to wrongful behavior on the part of the agent of the behavior does not undo the wrong that they originally visited on the other party, and so it remains fitting for that party to resent the agent on that account. But acknowledgment, apology, and repair can make an *ex post* difference to the question of how reactive blame is best managed by the aggrieved party. As noted above, we may think of reactions of this kind as forms of protest, whereby the bearers of moral claims assert them interpersonally, standing up for themselves against those who show them disregard. But protest generally makes no sense once the person to whom it is directed

has acknowledged wrongdoing and apologized and made amends. The aggrieved party might then have reason, on balance, to forswear their reactive blame, treating it as something that will no longer be allowed to come between the parties as their relations unfold, going forward.

But there are other reasons for action as well that might have a bearing on how warranted anger might best be managed. In one non-standard kind of case, there might be moral reasons for overcoming resentment even though the wrongdoers haven't yet acknowledged wrongdoing or apologized and offered to make amends. Preemptive forgiveness in a situation with this structure can function to give the aggrieved party the moral high ground, and that might well be strategically advantageous in a larger political fight to combat injustice and oppression. This would be one way of understanding the stances of Gandhi and King, and it attributes to them compelling practical reasons for managing their warranted anger in the manner characteristic of forgiveness, in order to advance a larger moral cause.<sup>27</sup>

In a still different kind of case, the reasons that speak in favor of forswearing warranted reactive attitudes are prudential rather than moral in nature. There are circumstances in which continued fruitless protest can be debilitating for the protester, interfering with their ability to maintain emotional equilibrium and get on with their own lives. Under these conditions, the aggrieved party might be well-advised to overcome such resentment as they continue to feel, regardless of whether the person at whom it is targeted has apologized, in order to move forward with their own projects. This would again be a question of working to overcome or to forswear a reactive attitude that it would still be fitting for the individual who was wronged to feel.

### *5. Global Critiques of Reactive Blame.*

Reactive blame, I have argued, involves oppositional attitudes, which are prone to come between the subject who bears them and the individual who is their target; they are inherently sources of friction in human relationships, and this helps to make them intelligible as ways of asserting moral claims and protesting when they are flouted. I argued further that oppositional tendencies of this kind can be managed in different ways, illustrating the point through brief consideration of the cases of hypocritical blame and forgiveness. In both of these cases, we find that agents have reason to overcome the oppositional tendencies to which they are subject, suppressing them or setting them aside, and treating them as interpersonally insignificant to the extent they might residually persist.

If this much is granted, however, then space begins to open up for a moral global critique of reactive blame. In the examples involving hypocrisy and forgiveness, the reasons for overcoming angry disapprobation are comparatively local; there is something in the subject's own conduct or circumstances, or in the ex post reactions of the wrongful party at whom their disapprobation is directed, that gives them reason to overcome their reactive blame. Once reasons of these kinds are acknowledged, however, the possibility comes into view that they generalize, so that subjects always have reason to forswear such reactive attitudes as it might be internally fitting for them experience. In my view, these are the terms in which we should understand philosophical skepticism about reactive blame. The interesting objection to this way of responding to wrongful behavior is not that it is evaluatively incoherent, but that there are compelling reasons for subjects to forswear it across the board, even on occasions when it would be internally fitting or warranted. I am not myself persuaded by these skeptical

arguments, at the end of the day, but they are not merely confused or conceptually misguided, and the challenges they present need to be addressed on their own terms. In the remainder of my discussion I shall defend this claim by sketching three different ways in which a skeptical account of reactive blame might be developed.

One form of global critique might rightly be called pragmatic. I have in mind the idea that acceding to oppositional anger is generally and on balance ineffective, considered as a way of protesting against wrongful conduct and restoring to equilibrium the relationships that it destabilizes.<sup>28</sup> Even if a susceptibility to reactive blame comes naturally to us, and helps to render moral standards legible as requirements and to incentivize compliance with them, it is coherent to think that it might function to incite unproductive responses in those at whom they are targeted. It is certainly the case that confrontation and protest sometimes make the people they target defensive and prone to withdrawal. A coherent further supposition is that these are the default reactions of people to reactive blame, at least under contemporary conditions, and that their negative consequences for human social relations outweigh whatever positive effects they tend to bring about. The key thought here is that compliance with moral standards would more effectively be encouraged if we did not treat them as interpersonal requirements, but rather as ideals whose violation attracts constructive encouragement—in a spirit of meekness or generalized love—rather than remonstrance and reactive blame. I do not find this suggestion particularly plausible myself; but it describes an intelligible scenario, resting in part on empirical claims about the consequences of managing reactive attitudes in one way rather than another. If the claims were true, then we would generally have compelling reason to work to

overcome reactive blame in our relations with other people, even when they treat us in ways that provide warrant for attitudes of angry disapproval.<sup>29</sup>

A second avenue of global critique would appeal to reasons of a broadly eudaimonistic character. I noted earlier that there are situations in which it is better for a person to try to move beyond their resentment about something that was visited upon them in the past; continued anger, however apt it might be, sometimes prevents us from moving on with our lives and taking advantage of such opportunities as it is still open to us to pursue. But maybe something like this is true not just on some specific occasions, but across the board for human agents. In the spirit of Stoicism, it might generally be thought advantageous for us to try to detach ourselves from the wrongs that we have suffered—not because doing so would better promote compliance with moral standards in our social world, but because of the effects of such detachment on the quality and character of our own existence.<sup>30</sup> If what I said in section 3 above has merit, there would inevitably be some personal loss in a regime of managing our reactive attitudes so that we approximate to this kind of detachment; we might sacrifice, for instance, the kind of self-respect that goes together with a willingness to assert moral claims against others on our own behalf. But possibly these losses would be more than compensated by the personal advantages of detachment, with the result that our lives go better on the whole when we work to overcome those reactive attitudes toward others that their actions give us occasion to feel. This would be a different basis for skepticism about reactive blame, grounded in a distinct class of reasons for action.

Finally, there is a potential basis for global critique of blame in one specific set of moral considerations, those that involve requirements of fairness.<sup>31</sup> Reactive blame, I have argued, is

inherently aversive, involving oppositional attitudes that introduce friction into human relationships. To accede to these attitudes when they are apt, and treat them as interpersonally significant, is to assent to one's participation in a system of social pressures that subjects wrongdoers to unwelcome responses to their behavior. But there is a venerable philosophical question, discussed briefly in the first section of this paper, about whether it is ever fair to go along with such reactions in a world in which people lack ultimate freedom of the will. Maybe it would not be fair for agents to be exposed to aversive pressures of the relevant kind if they did not have an appropriate opportunity to avoid them. And maybe this condition is satisfied in turn only in a world in which it is completely up to agents themselves to determine what they are going to do, in a way it would not be in a world in which agency is embedded in the larger flow of causal processes. Freedom of the will is arguably irrelevant to the question of whether the reactive attitudes are fitting responses to wrongful actions. But it might not be irrelevant to the distinct question of whether there is a specifically moral objection to managing such reactions in a certain way, by going along with them and granting them an important role in one's relationships with other people. If people lack the relevant kind of freedom, the result would be that it is generally problematic, on moral grounds, to accede to our reactive attitudes and to grant them significance in our relations with those who disregard the claims we hold against them.

Again, I do not myself endorse this form of global skepticism about reactive blame. But the challenge it describes is an intelligible one that needs to be addressed head-on rather than avoided or dismissed. As I noted in section 1, philosophers sometimes allege that the "pessimistic" view of moral responsibility founders on a confusion between the reasons to

which the reactive attitudes are properly responsive and moral requirements of fairness, which are reasons for action rather than for emotional attitudes.<sup>32</sup> But as I have reconstructed it, the pessimist's challenge acknowledges the difference between the considerations that provide warrant for reactive blame and the moral reasons for action that bear on the question of how reactive attitudes are to be managed. A different complaint about the challenge is that it has application only if reactive blame is understood to involve the imposition of sanctions on the wrongdoer, which is an implausible interpretation of what we are doing when we blame people morally for their conduct.<sup>33</sup> But this complaint too is misguided. Reactive attitudes are oppositional stances, which introduce friction into human relationships; this is essential to their constructive roles as (for instance) ways of standing up for oneself and drawing social lines that are not to be crossed.<sup>34</sup> But this inherently oppositional aspect of reactive blame is enough to give the libertarian challenge a basis. We do not need to assimilate angry disapprobation to the literal application of sanctions in order to raise a moral question about how it can fairly be regulated or managed.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment", as reprinted in Gary Watson, ed., *Free Will*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 72-93.

<sup>2</sup> This way of thinking about moral blame is sketched in my book *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994). For further discussion, see also my "Dispassionate Opprobrium: On Blame and the Reactive Sentiments", in Wallace et. al., eds., *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T. M. Scanlon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 348-72; also Susan Wolf, "Blame, Italian Style", in Wallace et. al., eds., *Reasons and Recognition*, pp. pp. 332-47.

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<sup>3</sup> For a sketch of this way of understanding the reasons to which emotions are immediately responsive, see Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000), pp. 65-90.

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions to this generalization include cases in which an emotion is felt to a degree that is out of proportion to the circumstances that render it fitting. Thus one might be inordinately afraid in circumstances that present one with a very low risk of catastrophic harm (consider the reactions of some parents to the possibility that their children might be abducted). On this dimension of fittingness, see D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy", p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> The idea that the reactive attitudes are responses to the quality of an agent's will is an important theme in Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment".

<sup>6</sup> On the idea that reactive attitudes are responses to being *wronged* by another, see e.g. Gary Watson, "The Trouble with Psychopaths", in Wallace et. al., eds., *Reasons and Recognition*, pp. 307-31, at p. 316; Miranda Fricker, "What's the Point of Blame? A Paradigm Based Explanation", *Noûs* 50 (2016), pp. 165-83", at p. 173; and Pamela Hieronymi, "Reflection and Responsibility", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42 (2014), pp. 3-41, at p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> This point is developed in my book *The Moral Nexus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), chap. 3.

<sup>8</sup> An interesting statement of this position is Pamela Hieronymi, "The Force and Fairness of Blame", *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004), pp. 115-48.

<sup>9</sup> This is of course one of the main themes of Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment", which also characterizes the parties to the more traditional debate as optimists and pessimists.

<sup>10</sup> A broadly similar position is defended by T. M. Scanlon in *Moral Dimensions: Permissibility, Meaning, Blame* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), chap. 4. Scanlon characterizes blame as involving reactive attitudes, but his primary focus is on intentions rather than the kind of emotions that typically figure in Strawsonian accounts of blame. The reasons to which blame is directly responsive, on his approach, accordingly include not just reasons for emotions, but also (and in the first instance) reasons for action. But it remains the case, for him, that questions of fairness are irrelevant to whether the right kinds of reasons for intentions and attitudes obtain in these situations.



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<sup>11</sup> See Hieronymi, “The Force and Fairness of Blame”, p. 136, for the comparison between reactive emotions and distrust.

<sup>12</sup> Martha Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> See especially Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*, chap. 2.

<sup>14</sup> For a general defense of moral blame, see George Sher, *In Praise of Blame* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Defenses of blame that focus more specifically on the reactive attitudes, and their angry aspect in particular, include David Shoemaker, “You Oughta Know: Defending Angry Blame”, in Myisha Cherry and Owen Flanagan, eds., *The Moral Psychology of Anger* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), pp. 67-88 and Amia Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger”, *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 26 (2018), pp. 123-44. I agree with much in the accounts of both Shoemaker and Srinivasan, though I shall emphasize some points that are not very prominent in their treatments.

<sup>15</sup> For an illuminating defense of the idea that the disparate forms of blame can be understood as ways of protesting against moral infractions, see Angela M. Smith, “Moral Blame and Moral Protest”, in D. Justin Coates and Neal A. Tognazzini, eds., *Blame: Its Nature and Norms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 27-48.

<sup>16</sup> See “Freedom and Resentment”, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> See “Freedom and Resentment”, pp. 84-5; this theme is emphasized in the interpretation of the reactive attitudes offered in my *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, chap. 2.

<sup>18</sup> On these points, see Thomas E. Hill, “Servility and Self-Respect”, as reprinted in Robin Dillon, ed., *Dignity, Character, and Respect* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 76-92; also his “Self-Respect Reconsidered”, as reprinted in Dillon, ed., *Dignity, Character, and Respect*, pp. 117-24. See also Collin Bird, “Self-Respect and the Respect of Others”, *European Journal of Philosophy* 18 (2010), pp. 17-40. The key idea in these accounts is that the kind of self-respect at issue involves a conviction that one is entitled to certain forms of treatment from others, along with a willingness to protest infringements of those entitlements.

<sup>19</sup> Compare Pamela Hieronymi, “Reflection and Responsibility”. Hieronymi contrasts our capacity for self-management with the kind of “answerability” that renders us properly

responsible for our attitudes. I agree with her that self-management is not our primary relation to our own states of mind, but believe our capacity for it has greater significance for questions of moral responsibility than she seems to allow.

<sup>20</sup> See Jane Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?", *Noûs* 51 (2017), pp. 302-26.

<sup>21</sup> For a statement of the position quickly sketched here, see my "Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38 (2010), pp. 307-341.

<sup>22</sup> In some cases, agency might be involved in the stance of acceding to a reactive attitude, insofar as one omits to exercise over it the capacity for managerial control that one possesses.

<sup>23</sup> I have not said what the moral objection might be to which one is subject in these cases, and there are various accounts of it that might be offered. My own view is that the moral objection involves the violation of a basic requirement of equal treatment and consideration: the hypocrite effectively treats their own interests as worthy of a higher degree of protection than are the interests of those whom they are prepared to blame. See my "Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons", secs. 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> See Agnes Callard, "Reasons to Be Angry Forever", in Cherry and Flanagan, eds., *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, pp. 123-37.

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment", p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> There are cases where this attempt to exercise managerial control fails, and despite our best efforts we find that our lingering resentment remains significant interpersonally, so that we are unable to forswear it or to put it to the side. This is consistent with my analysis, insofar as the failure to forgive is at the level of the management of the attitude rather than its mere persistence. Lingering feelings of resentment are unproblematic insofar as one is able to treat them as interpersonally insignificant; it is only when their persistence interferes with one's successful management of them that the effort to forgive collapses.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. my *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*, pp. 72-3. Interpreted in this way, Gandhi and King did not completely overcome angry disapprobation, but operated within a moral psychology that retains an important place for this way of reacting. Their stance in relation to their oppressors presupposed that there was warrant for resenting them, and also that their failure to apologize and make amends would make it apt for them to accede to these reactions;

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this is what positions them on the moral high ground. (Contrast Nussbaum, *Anger and Forgiveness*, chap. 7, who interprets Gandhi and King, as well as Nelson Mandela, as having somehow moved altogether beyond the problematic reactions of her title.)

<sup>28</sup> This venerable line of thought figures significantly in Nussbaum's critique of angry blame in *Anger and Forgiveness*. For another contemporary expression of the idea, see Glen Pettigrove, "Meekness and 'Moral' Anger", *Ethics* 122 (2012), pp. 341-70; Pettigrove's critique focuses not only on the ineffectiveness of anger relative to moral aims, but also on its tendency to distort our judgment.

<sup>29</sup> Compare the discussion of the "counterproductivity critique" of anger in Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger". Srinivasan thinks of the critique as identifying prudential reasons against angry blame, and argues that these reasons for action need to be weighed against the reasons that make anger apt in the first place. (See also Shoemaker, "You Oughta Know", p. 82, for the idea that these reasons might be weighed against each other.) I agree that there are reasons of both kinds might bear on the assessment of anger in these cases. But precisely because the reasons are of different kinds, I don't think that they can straightforwardly be weighed against each other. There is room for weighing in the assessment of reactive blame, but in my view it should be understood to involve the weighing of reasons for action that speak for and against managing the reactive attitudes in different ways. (I also don't think that the reasons for action appealed to in the "counterproductivity critique" are really prudential in nature; they are better understood as pragmatic reasons, concerning the effectiveness of anger at advancing moral aims.)

<sup>30</sup> In practice, arguments that appeal to eudaimonistic reasons of these kinds also tend to appeal to pragmatic and even metaphysical considerations as well; this seems to me true of work in both the Stoic and the Buddhist traditions, for instance. For a recent discussion that highlights eudaimonistic considerations (among others) in a global critical assessment of anger, see Owen Flanagan, *The Geography of Morals: Varieties of Moral Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), chaps. 10-12.

<sup>31</sup> For a defense of this way of understanding the traditional debate about freedom and moral responsibility, see my *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments*.

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<sup>32</sup> See (again) Hieronymi, “The Force and Fairness of Blame”.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, Watson, “The Trouble with Psychopaths”, at pp. 315-16. In earlier work Watson had himself suggested that there are significant similarities between moral blame and legal sanctions; see his “Two Faces of Responsibility”, as reprinted in his *Agency and Answerability: Selected Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 260-88, at sec. 7.

<sup>34</sup> In sec. 3 above, I also argued that this oppositional aspect of reactive blame could be understood to implicate us in a system of attitudinal pressures, of the kind that incentivize norm-compliant behavior in social animals. There is something sanction-like about attitudes that can be understood in this way, but to acknowledge this point is simple realism about how we relate to each other; it does not require us to think of ourselves as individually punishing wrongdoers through the attitudes we take up toward them.

<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to the editors of the *European Journal of Philosophy* for inviting me to deliver the Mark Sacks Lecture in 2017, and for the audience of the lecture in Frankfurt for helpful feedback. I also received valuable comments and suggestions from audiences at the following venues: the University of London; the LMU in Munich; Sonoma State University; New York University; the Metropolitan University of Denver; and the FAU in Erlangen.